MALIBU COMICS
ULTRAVERSE
YEAR ZERO™
THE DEATH OF
THE SQUAD™
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IT'S THE STORY THAT STARTED THE ULTRAVERSE!
BRACE YOURSELF FOR THE STORY OF THE LIFE AND DEATH OF THE SQUAD!
HUDNALL
BENEFIEL
RODRIGUEZ
DIRECT EDITION
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WE WERE YOUNG, WE WERE HUMAN. WE HAD THE SAME DREAMS, HOPES, AND WISHES THAT MOST PEOPLE HAVE.
ALL WE WANTED WAS A GOOD LIFE AHEAD OF US. FOR A SHORT TIME, THE WISH WAS GRANTED.
BUT WHEN LIFE DEALS YOU A GOOD HAND, DON'T THINK IT'S ALWAYS GOING TO LAST.
THAT WAS OUR LESSON, AND WE LEARNED IT...
THE HARD WAY

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WOLFPACK with SALVADOR MANCHA • interior color •
HANK KANALZ & PHIL CRAIN • editors •

I WAS RUNNING A NEW AGE SHOP ON THE THIRD STREET PROMENADE IN SANTA MONICA.
Crystal PALACE
THINGS WERE SLOW. I WAS BEGINNING TO WONDER IF I COULD KEEP THE PLACE GOING.
I SHARED THE BUSINESS WITH MY CURRENT BOYFRIEND. BUT WE WERE HAVING SOME PROBLEMS.
YOU'VE GOTTA GET INTO REHAB, PETE. I CAN'T PUT UP WITH YOUR COKE-HEAD PERSONALITY ANY LONGER.
30% OFF!
DON'T GIVE ME THAT CRAP! YOU KNOW I'VE BEEN CLEAN!
YOU CAN'T FOOL ME! ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU'RE USING UP ALL OUR MONEY!
GET INTO A PROGRAM, OR I'M OUT OF THIS RELATIONSHIP! I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE!
AW, C'MON. LET'S NOT BE THIS WAY.
I PROMISE I WON'T DO IT AGAIN.
$200
3

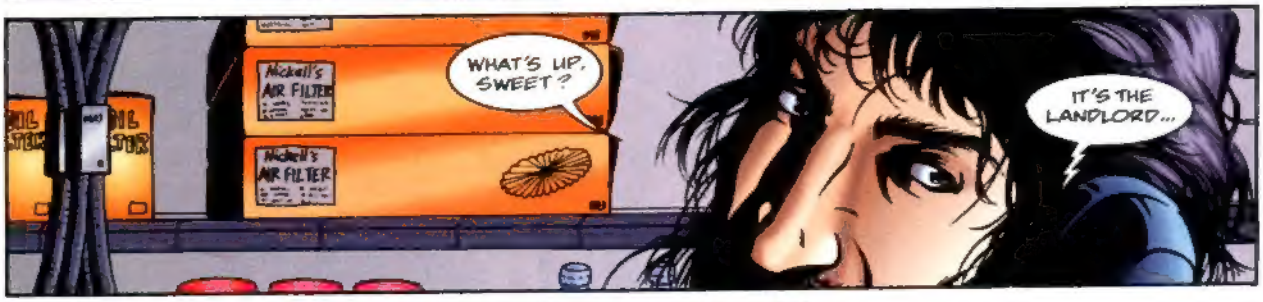
WILLIAM
ACKERMAN
HEY!
I'M TALKING TO YOU!
YOU HEARD WHAT I SAID.
BITCH!
Petey the Albatross

ACROSS TOWN, IN HOLLYWOOD, A YOUNG ACTOR WANNABE NAMED TOM HAWKE WAS MAKING HIS LIVING IN THE PIZZA BUSINESS.
LA PIZZA
HE DIDN'T KNOW IT AT THE TIME, BUT HE WAS FATED FOR A LIFE MORE FANTASTIC THAN HE COULD HAVE EVER IMAGINED.
EVEN IF HIS LIFE AT THIS MOMENT WAS INCREDIBLY BASIC.
PIZZA
OH, MAN... NOT AGAIN.

HEY, KILO!
C'MIN, DUDE. S'OPEN.
WUSSUP, DUDE?
KILO, YOU GOTTA STOP LEAVING THIS PLACE IN A SHAMBLES.
I HATE COMING HOME FROM WORK AND FINDING THE FRIGGIN' AFTER-MATH.
YEAH, WELL... I WUZ GONNA GET TO IT. BUT WE HAD OTHER THINGS ON OUR MINDS, Y'KNOW.
HEE HEE
WELL, PLEASE TAKE CARE OF IT, OKAY?
LATER, ROOMIE. BUT I NEED TO REST UP. MY BAND'S GOTTA GIG TOMORROW NIGHT.
TCH!... ROOM-MATES.

CARLOS JIMENEZ WAS A MECHANIC WHO LIVED AND WORKED IN WEST COVINA.
Lou's SMOG CHECK $19.95
Lou's
FULL SERVICE AUTO CARE
HIS DREAMS WERE FAIRLY SIMPLE. HE WANTED TO PROVIDE FOR HIS FAMILY.

Lou's AUTO CARE
HEY, CARLOS! IT'S YOUR WIFE ON THE PHONE.


Nickell's AIR FILTER
Nickell's AIR FILTER
WHAT'S UP, SWEET?
IT'S THE LANDLORD...

HE WANTS TO RAISE THE RENT ON OUR APARTMENT AGAIN. TO $750!
WHAT?! HE JUST RAISED IT!
HE SAYS IT'S BEEN SIX MONTHS. BUT HOW CAN WE AFFORD IT?
WE CAN'T MOVE! THAT COSTS TOO MUCH! SO WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO?

I DUNNO. I'LL THINK OF SOMETHING.

YOU SAID IT, GIRL!
IN WATTS, JAMAL BLASS DREAMED OF BEING A RAP ARTIST. HE'D CUT SOME DEMO TAPES, BUT NO RECORD DEALS HAVE MATERIALIZED.
SO I SAYS "IS THAT SO!?" AND HE SAID "DAMN RIGHT!" SO I SAYS "NOT IF I HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT!"
SO HE SAYS "OH YEAH?!" AND I SAID "YEAH!", SO...
YO, SIS. HOW 'BOUT GETTING OFF THE PHONE? I'M EXPECTING A CALL.
LISSEN, RAP STAR. THEM RECORD PRODUCERS AIN'T NEVER GONNA CALL YOU, SO DON'T YOU WORRY ABOUT IT.
YOU'VE BEEN ON THE PHONE OVER AN HOUR!
KPOW!KPOW!
AAH!
DRIVE BY! SOUNDED LIKE NEXT DOOR
I GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE.

I WAS WORKING IN THE STORE ONE DAY, TALKING TO A CUSTOMER...
THE DIFFERENT COLORED CRYSTALS ARE MEANT TO EMPOWER YOUR DIFFERENT CHAKRAS
THEY RESONATE TO EACH FREQUENCY SO YOUR AURA CAN GET CHARGED UP.
THIS ONE IS SUPPOSED TO REALLY JUICE UP YOUR CHAKRAS. IT...
ARE YOU OKAY?
...I GUESS SO. I JUST FELT-- FELT STRANGE FOR A SECOND, LIKE...
YOW! I'LL BUY TEN OF THOSE THINGS!
9

OVER IN WEST L.A., TOM WAS DOING A READING FOR A TV SHOW
OKAY TOM YOU'RE READING FOR THE PART OF AVERY A DRUG PUSHER WHO'S HAVING A MEETING WITH THE MAIN VILLAIN.
LISTEN, MILO.. YOU THINK THIS IS THE HARD STUFF...
BUT I'M TELLING YOU MAN, THE HARD STUFF IS LATER, WHEN..
WHEN...
AVERY
WHAT!?
BRAVO!
KLAPKLAPKLA

INGLEWOOD: JAMAL BLASS WAS CUTTING ANOTHER DEMO...
FESTIVAL
OCTOBER 9, 1976
I'VE SEEN THE HUNGER I'VE SEEN THE PAIN PEOPLE'S EYES DON'T LIE THEY TELL YOU THEIR STORY.
THE STREETS ARE BROKEN THE PEOPLE, SHATTERED THE PAIN AND ANGER, BUILDING CHANGE IS COMING AN EXPLOSION, BUILDING...
OKAY, JAMAL RUN THAT LINE AGAIN I HAD TROUBLE WITH THE SOUND
HEY MAN, THIS MIKE IS BARGAIN BASEMENT WHERE'D YOU GET THIS CRAP?
HOW DO I KNOW THIS MIKE EVEN WORKS? THE THING'S.
YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR, BRO THIS AIN'T A CHEAP STUDIO FOR NOTHIN'.

YOU PEOPLE SAID YOU FIXED MY CAR, BUT IT STILL HAS THAT KNOCKING NOISE!
IT COULD BE THE GAS YOU'RE USING WHAT GRADE DO YOU GET?
IT ISN'T THE GAS! NOW TAKE A LOOK AT IT AND FIX IT!
WEST COVINA: CARLOS JIMENEZ WAS WITH A CUSTOMER...
OKAY. I'LL JUST LIFT IT UP SO I CAN GET UNDER THERE
CRASH!
HOLY SH!#!!
RUN!
AAH!
MY CAR!
I'LL SUE YOU FOR THIS!
IT WASN'T MY FAULT!

SILVER LAKE: A SMALL TIME CROOK NAMED LARRY PRYCE WATCHED HIS BODY CHANGE.
RED HAIR TURNED GREEN, TAN FLESH WENT WHITE, MUSCLES EXPANDED FOR NO REASON AT ALL.
EAST HOLLYWOOD. RAMON CHAVEZ WAS HAVING AN EPIPHANY
HIS STOLEN VCR SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN DESIGNED BY CHILDREN. EVERYTHING BECAME SIMPLE TO HIM.
VCR
STUDIO CITY: JOHN BECKMAN'S MIND FELT THE SOIL IN THE POTTED PLANT FROM ACROSS THE ROOM.
SUDDENLY, HE REALIZED IT WAS HIS TO COMMAND.

VAN NUYS : UNEMPLOYED CONTRACTOR JOE HUSKIN WAS ALSO GETTING STRANGE THOUGHTS ABOUT DIRT
CULVER CITY · JUNIOR HIGH STUDENT LUCY JONES COULD SUDDENLY TAP PEOPLE'S MINDS
TARZANA : JASVINDER SINGH BECAME CONVINCED ELECTRICITY WOULD DO WHATEVER HE WANTED.
IN FACT, ALL OVER THE L.A. BASIN, PEOPLE WERE DISCOVERING THEY HAD POWERS.

AND DEEP WITHIN THE EARTH UNDER CRUSHING OCEAN DEPTHS, REX MUNDI WAS BROODING
IT'S STARTING AGAIN. AND THE EFFECTS ARE COMING FASTER THIS TIME IN L.A.
RUN AN ANALYSIS! I MUST KNOW WHERE THESE ENERGY BEAMS ARE COMING FROM!
AND NOTIFY ME THE SECOND THE MEDIA STARTS REVEALING THE NEW ULTRAS
SEARCH ALL LAW ENFORCEMENT COMPUTERS FOR ANY INSTANCES OF ULTRA CRIMES OR HEROICS
AND GIVE ME THE ADDRESSES AND/OR DESCRIPTIONS OF THESE ULTRAS WHEN THEY'RE LOGGED

STOP
YO! THAT'S HIM! STOP!
HEY. RAP STAR! WE WANNA TALK TO YOU!
THERE WAS A DRIVE BY LAST NIGHT AT YOUR NEIGHBORS' YOU DIDN'T SEE NUTHIN'
NO
DAMN STRAIGHT! AND YOU BETTER NOT TELL THE COPS YOU SAW ANYTHING EITHER!
I SAID I DIDN'T SEE ANYTHING.
YOU DISSIN' ME, HOUSE NEGRO?!
YOU'RE DISSIN' ME! AND DON'T CALL ME THAT.

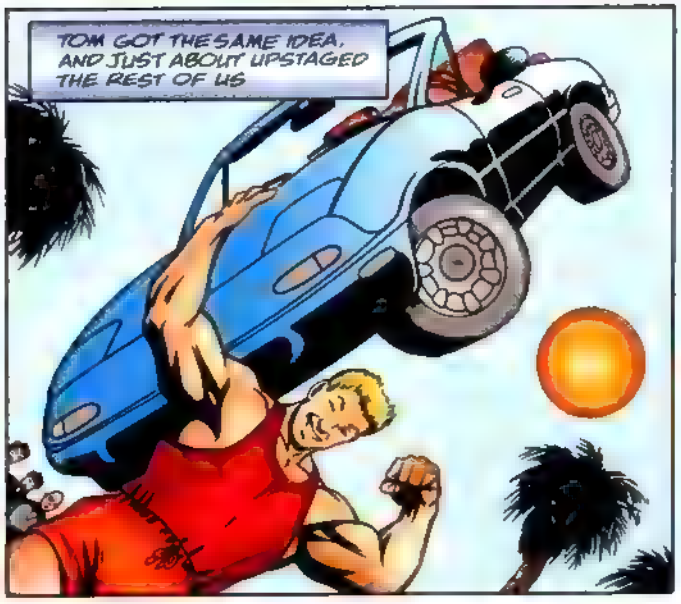
S'MATTER, BLACK? DON'T KNOW YOUR PLACE?
BOY NEEDS A LESSON DO HIM!
AAAH!
FOOM
MY HAND! AAAAH! MY HAND!
JAMAL GUESSED HE WAS THE CAUSE SOMEHOW JUST AS HE MADE THE MIKE EXPLODE
SO HE MADE A RESOLUTION
WADOOM

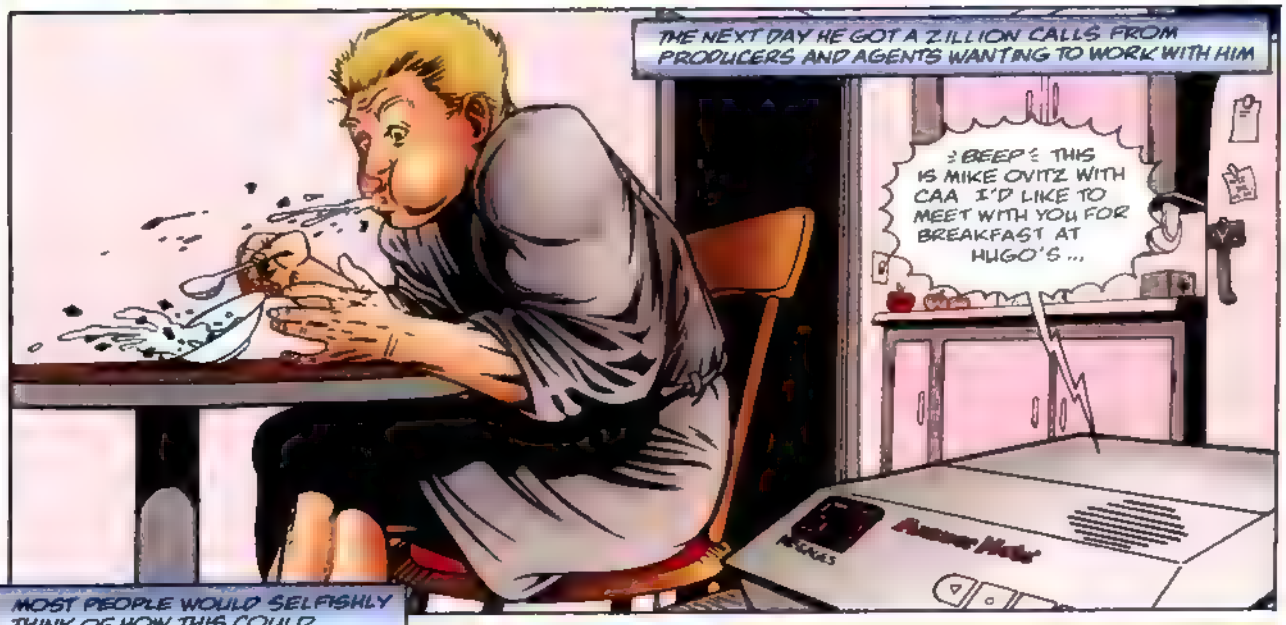
3
CARLOS, WHAT'S WRONG? WHY ARE YOU HOME SO EARLY?
I'VE BEEN FIRED
WHAT?!
THERE WAS AN ACCIDENT AT WORK THE BOSS BLAMED IT ON ME.
I DON'T KNOW HOW IT HAPPENED IT WAS ALL SO CRAZY.
CARLOS, WHAT HAPPENED?
I DUNNO I WAS JUST THINKING I HAD TO LIFT A CAR I PRESSED THE BUTTON FOR THE HYDRAULICS... AND THEN...
18

EEEK!
THOOM
IT WAS ME!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! SOMEHOW, I...
OH MY GOD...!
HONEY, DON'T YOU SEE WHAT THIS MEANS?
OUR PROBLEMS ARE OVER!

news 9
WE HAVE A COUPLE INTERESTING STORIES TONIGHT, CONNIE. RIGHT OUT OF THE TABLOIDS!
IN WEST COVINA, A MAN NAMED CARLOS JIMENEZ HAS DEVELOPED THE POWER OF TELE-KENESIS...
JESUS! I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO HAD A WEIRD DAY
... IN LAYMAN'S TERMS THAT MEANS HE CAN MOVE OBJECTS WITH THE POWER OF THOUGHT...
IN WATTS, A YOUNG MAN NAMED JAMAL BLASS CLAIMS HE NOW HAS THE ABILITY TO MAKE THINGS EXPLODE.
HE DISCOVERED THIS WHILE BEING HARASSED BY A LOCAL GANG
IT WASN'T JUST ME! OH MY GOD...
I REALIZED TWO THINGS THAT DAY ONE: I NOW HAD A STRANGE GIFT THAT COULD MAKE ME POTENTIALLY WEALTHY
TWO: IF I DIDN'T GO PUBLIC, THE GOVERNMENT MIGHT FIND OUT ABOUT ME AND HAVE ME TAKEN AWAY FOR STUDY.
SO I CALLED THE T.V STATION

I MADE THE 11 O'CLOCK NEWS IT WAS PICKED UP BY OTHER NETWORKS AND CARRIED AROUND THE WORLD.

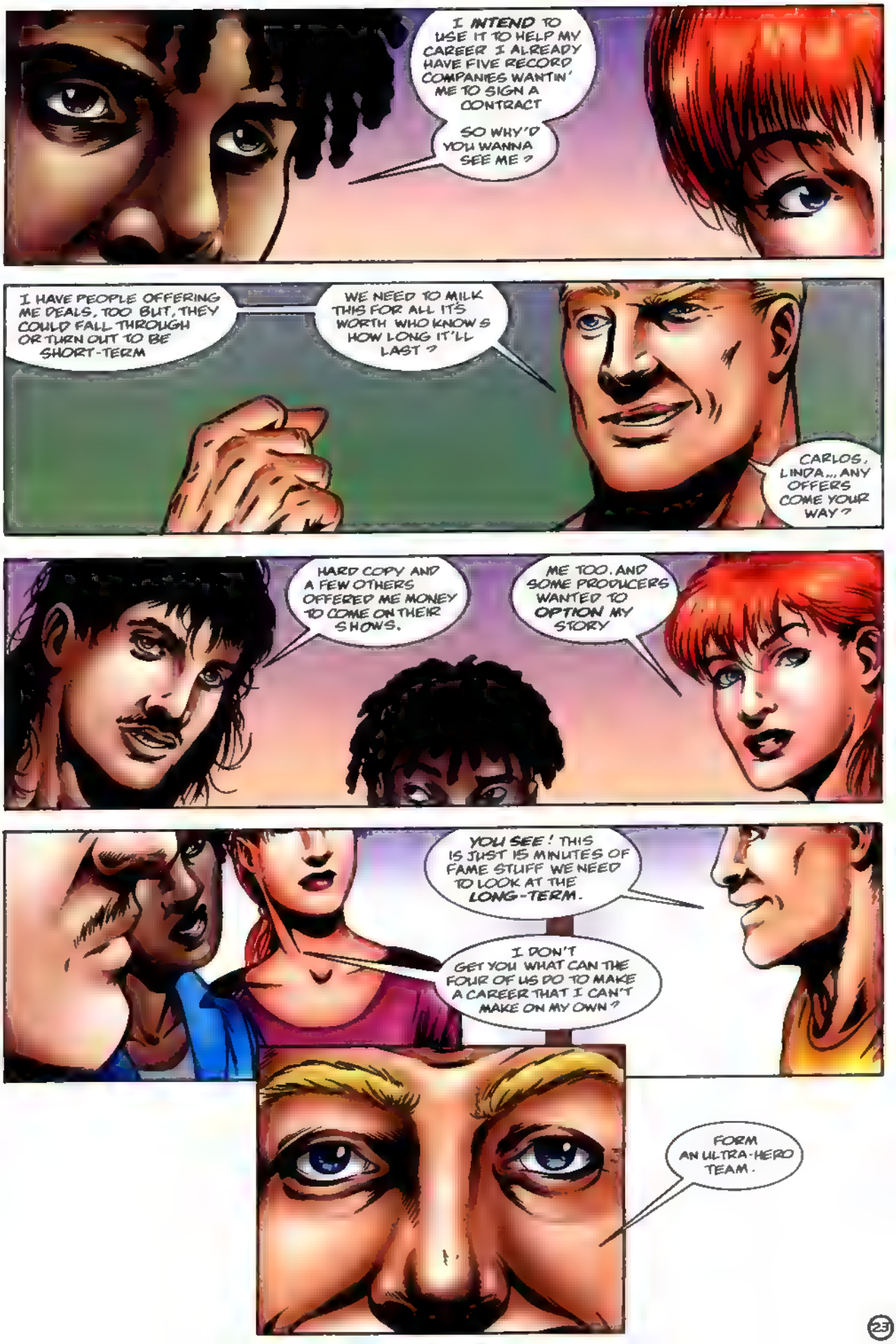

TOM GOT THE SAME IDEA, AND JUST ABOUT UPSTAGED THE REST OF US

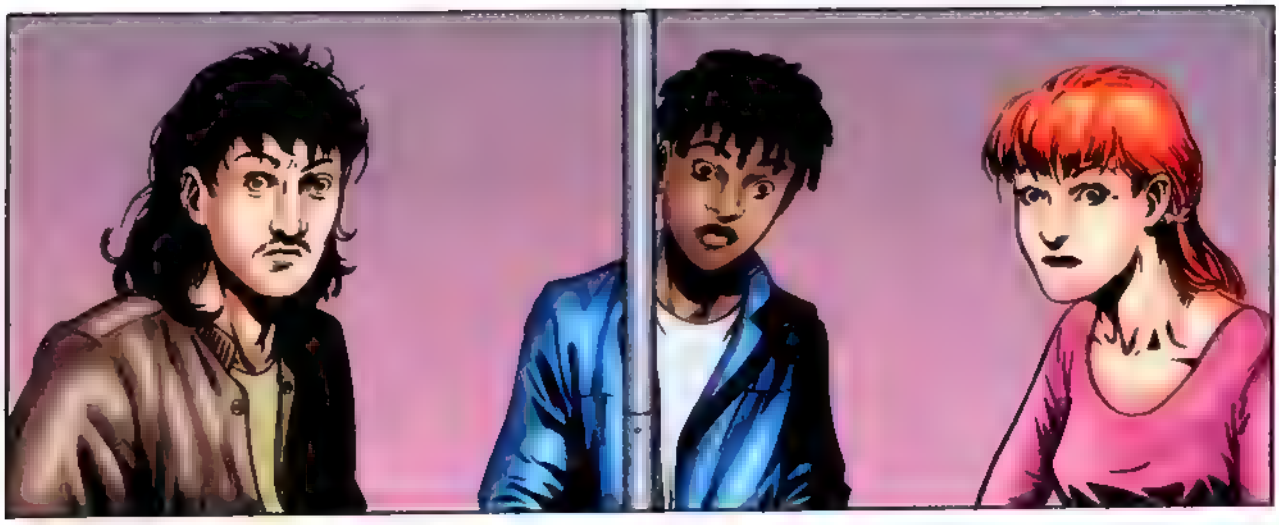

THE NEXT DAY HE GOT A ZILLION CALLS FROM PRODUCERS AND AGENTS WANTING TO WORK WITH HIM
:BEEP: THIS IS MIKE OVITZ WITH CAA I'D LIKE TO MEET WITH YOU FOR BREAKFAST AT HUGO'S ...
Answer Mode

MOST PEOPLE WOULD SELFISHLY THINK OF HOW THIS COULD BENEFIT THEM, BUT TOM HAD A BETTER IDEA.
OKEY DOKEY FOOD MART
SUPER INTENSO
CAUSE
INNING
UCKS

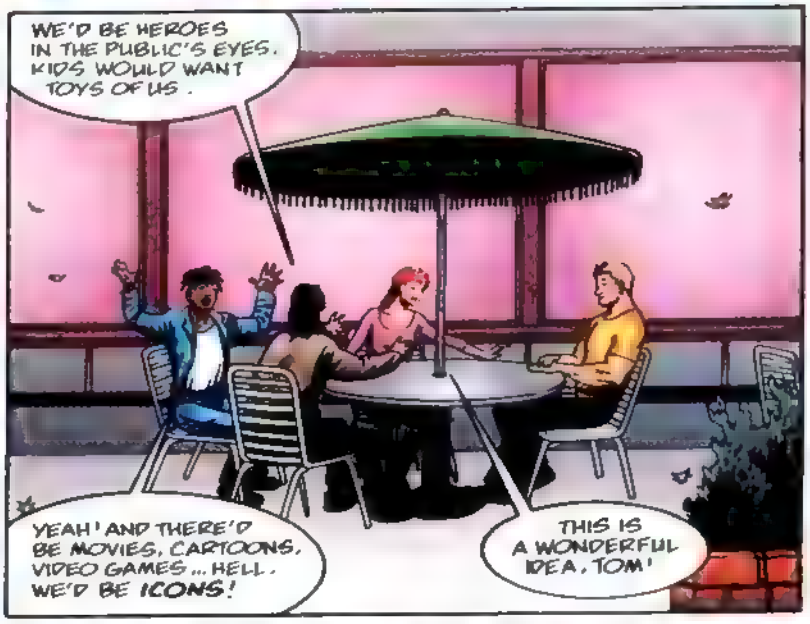
MY STORE WAS CRAMMED WITH CURIOSITY-SEEKERS WHEN I GOT THE CALL FROM HIM.
IT WAS THE MOST FATEFUL CALL OF MY LIFE
SOME GUY NAMED TOM HAWKE WANTS TO TALK TO YOU YOU KNOW HIM?
NO, BUT I'LL TAKE IT.

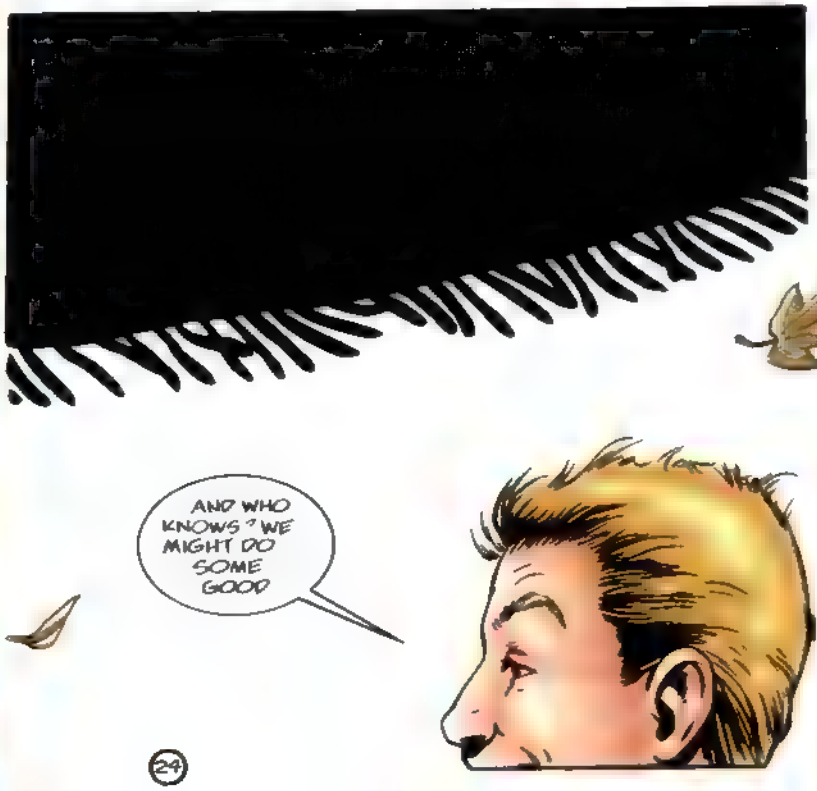
HELLO?
HI, I'M TOM HAWKE THE NEWS CREW TOLD ME WHERE TO REACH YOU
YOU'RE THAT ACTOR RIGHT? THE ONE WHO GOT POWERS THE OTHER DAY
YEP, THAT'S ME
I WAS WONDERING IF WE COULD MEET WE NEED TO TALK
IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO ME, I DON'T HAVE A CLUE DO YOU?
NO, BUT SOME GOOD CAN COME OUT OF THIS
HE WANTED US TO GET TOGETHER AT A RESTAURANT JAMAL AND CARLOS WERE ALSO INVITED
FOR SALVATION ARMY
THEN TOM MADE HIS PITCH
IT'S LIKE THIS WE ALL GOT THESE WEIRD POWERS OUT OF THE BLUE, YEAH?
WHO KNOWS HOW LONG THEY'LL LAST OR WHERE THEY'VE COME FROM.
WHAT I DO KNOW IS THAT WE COULD ALL USE A BOOST. THIS IS OUR CHANCE


I INTEND TO USE IT TO HELP MY CAREER I ALREADY HAVE FIVE RECORD COMPANIES WANTIN' ME TO SIGN A CONTRACT
SO WHY'D YOU WANNA SEE ME?
I HAVE PEOPLE OFFERING ME DEALS, TOO BUT, THEY COULD FALL THROUGH OR TURN OUT TO BE SHORT-TERM
WE NEED TO MILK THIS FOR ALL IT'S WORTH WHO KNOWS HOW LONG IT'LL LAST?
CARLOS, LINDA... ANY OFFERS COME YOUR WAY?
HARD COPY AND A FEW OTHERS OFFERED ME MONEY TO COME ON THEIR SHOWS.
ME TOO. AND SOME PRODUCERS WANTED TO OPTION MY STORY
YOU SEE! THIS IS JUST IS MINUTES OF FAME STUFF WE NEED TO LOOK AT THE LONG-TERM.
I DON'T GET YOU WHAT CAN THE FOUR OF US DO TO MAKE A CAREER THAT I CAN'T MAKE ON MY OWN?
FORM AN ULTRA-HERO TEAM.



HOLD ON! IT'S NOT AS CRAZY AS IT SOUNDS
THERE'S A GOVERNMENT CONTRACTOR CALLED ULTRATECH THEY HAVE THIS GUY IN A GOOFY SUIT THEY CALL PROTOTYPE.
THIS SUIT ALLOWS HIM TO DO ULTRA-HUMAN STUFF AND IT'S DONE WONDERS FOR THEIR BUSINESS.
THINK OF WHAT FOUR PEOPLE WITH ULTRA-POWERS CAN ACCOMPLISH IF WE SAVED A FEW LIVES HERE AND THERE


WE'D BE HEROES IN THE PUBLIC'S EYES. KIDS WOULD WANT TOYS OF US.
YEAH! AND THERE'D BE MOVIES, CARTOONS, VIDEO GAMES... HELL. WE'D BE ICONS!
THIS IS A WONDERFUL IDEA, TOM!


AND WHO KNOWS? WE MIGHT DO SOME GOOD

ON THE SCREEN YOU SEE FOUR ULTRAS I WANT YOU TO KILL
THE BLOND MAN LOOKS FAMILIAR... LIKE SOMEONE WHO DEFEATED YOU DURING WORLD WAR I IT MAY BE THE SAME ULTRA...
WE'LL WAIT A WHILE TO SEE IF ANY OTHER ULTRAS COME OUT OF HIDING, NOW THAT THESE FOOLS ARE IN THE LIMELIGHT
THEN I WANT YOU TO GO TO WORK.
TO BE CONTINUED IN 30 DAYS!

FOR FIFTEEN CENTURIES I WAS LUKASZ A MALE KNIGHT SERVING THE WIZARD ARCHMAGE AGAINST THE EVIL BONEYARD WHEN THE WAR WENT BAD I WAS REINCARNATED AS A WOMAN EDEN BLAKE TO LEARN SORCERY! I'M ALSO LEARNING HOW TO BE A SINGLE MOM AND THE ULTRA HEROINE CALLED
MANTRA
HURRY, MANTRA! WE'RE GONNA BE LATE!
DON'T WORRY, EVIE, WE'LL BE FINE!
SEE, HONEY? WE'RE RIGHT ON TIME!
BOY, GOOD. I WAS AFRAID WE'D MISSED IT!
NO PARKING
STARBURST MEMORIES
Mike W. Barr • writer/ creator Dave Roberts • penciller
Scott Reed • inker Patrick Owsley • letterer
Interior Color • Peak Rats
Phil Crain • editor

HOSPITAL
AMBULANCES KEEP CLEAR
COME ON, MANTRA!
EVIE, CALL ME MOMMY, OKAY?
I SO WANT TO BE HER MOTHER-- IF SHE'LL LET ME.
SORRY.
WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING!
I SAID I WAS SORRY.
WE ARE GATHERED HERE TODAY TO CELEBRATE THE LIFE OF...
...LINDA WARREN, STARBURST, WAS SAVAGELY ATTACKED, AND WENT INTO A COMA FROM WHICH SHE HAS STILL NOT RECOVERED. SHE MAY NEVER AWAKEN.
BUT I HOPE SHE KNOWS SHE'S STILL LOVED. THANK YOU FOR COMING.
I'M SURE HARDCASE IS GRIEVING IN HIS OWN WAY. I HOPE HE'S OKAY.
EVIE, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
IT'S SO SAD, MANTRA. DO YOU 'MEMBER?
OH, NO, YOU DON'T...
PERSON
-burst
The Squad
Save the Children
"...IT WAS MOMMY AND ME WHO MET HER. I WAS JUST LITTLE. SHE HELD ME. SHE WAS PRETTY."

DELIVERY ONLY
I WISH I COULD SEE STARBURST.
SWEETHEART, SHE CAN'T TALK. IT'S LIKE SHE'S SLEEPING, BUT ALL THE TIME...
BUT IF SHE WANTS IT THAT BADLY...
OKAY, HONEY, HOLD ON TIGHT.
CAN WE, MANTRA? REALLY?
HOPE YOU WAKE UP, STARBURST. I LOVE YOU.
STOP HER--!
beep beep beep
STAY AWAY FROM ME! I DON'T WANT ANYONE TO DIE BUT HER--
--AND ME!
PRIVATE

YOU! ANOTHER DAMN ULTRA! STAY BACK, OR I'LL KILL YOU, TOO!
WHY?
MY SON... WAS KILLED BY THE THING THAT PUT HER IN THAT COMA. HE WAS A POLICEMAN. BUT NO ONE REMEMBERS HIM.
EVERYONE ONLY... REMEMBERS THE SQUAD... AND HER! HE DIED TOO!
SSSST
I COULDN'T STOP HER...
...BUT I COULD STOP HER FROM HURTING ANYONE.
NO!
WHY...?
BECAUSE STARBURST DOESN'T DESERVE THIS...
YOU OKAY, EVIE?
...ANY MORE THAN YOUR SON DID.
UH-HUH. D'YOU THINK STARBURST KNOWS YOU SAVED HER?
"I DON'T KNOW, HONEY. I HOPE SHE WILL, SOMEDAY."
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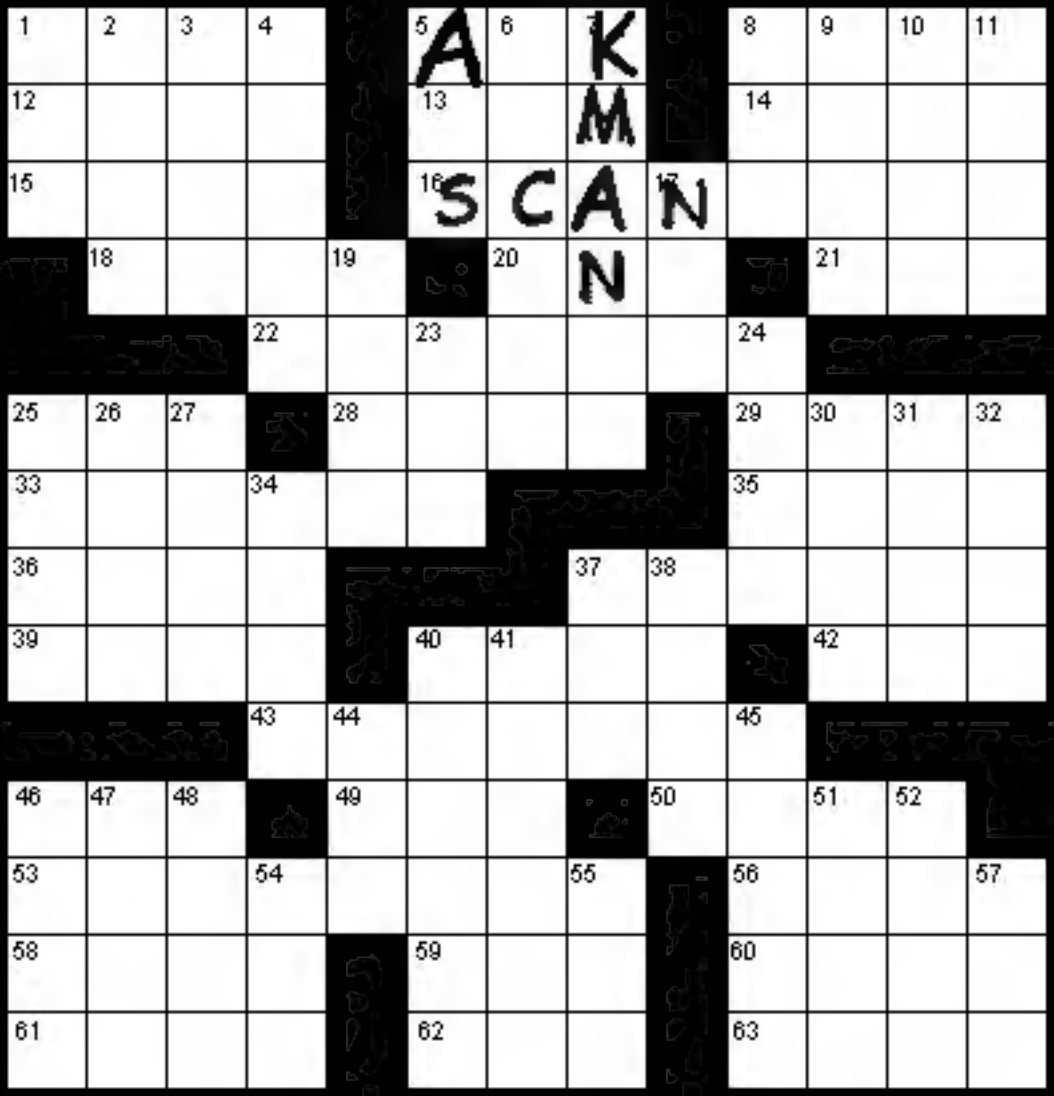
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